



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N • Olympia, WA 98501-1091 • (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building • 1111 Washington Street SE • Olympia, WA

June 23, 2004

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission will hold a hearing to receive public comment regarding possible amendments to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) rules related to the two-year wild steelhead retention moratorium. The hearing will take place on August 28, 2004, at the Kitsap Conference Center in Bremerton, Washington, beginning at 10:00 a.m. The agenda will be posted soon on the Commission's webpage at the following URL:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/com/meetings.htm>

At the Commission's meeting on February 6, 2004, steelhead sportfishing rules were amended and a two-year wild steelhead retention moratorium was adopted. The Commission received many comments and a petition to initiate rulemaking in response to its action adopting the moratorium. On April 29, 2004, the Commission directed Department staff to commence rulemaking regarding the wild steelhead retention moratorium, and rule change proposals were filed on June 18, 2004.

The August 28, 2004, public hearing provides interested persons the ability to make oral comments to the Commission on the rule changes proposed by staff. The Commission is seeking public input on whether these proposed changes should:

- Be adopted as proposed, which would revoke the moratorium on wild steelhead retention, reopen 12 rivers to retaining wild steelhead, and allow anglers to retain 1 wild steelhead per day and up to 5 wild steelhead per licensing year (see "Proposed Rule Changes" on the enclosure);
- Be amended in some fashion that you describe (for example; a change in the annual limit for wild steelhead; reopening some, but not all, of the rivers; or other measures to restrict wild steelhead harvest); or
- Not be adopted (retain the current rules; see "Current Rules column" on the enclosure).

If you do support some amount of wild steelhead retention, the Commission would be particularly interested in hearing your views on what the annual limit should be. Although the staff proposal is to reinstate the previous annual limit of 5 fish, we want to consider a range of possible annual limits if the decision is made to allow wild steelhead retention.

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The enclosed table details the current rules resulting from passage of the wild steelhead moratorium (middle column), and the staff proposals to reinstate the wild steelhead retention fisheries that were in place before the moratorium was adopted (right-hand column). The Commission is seeking input as to the best course of action in regard to the staff proposals. If you recommend amending the proposed changes, please include details of the amendments you would support and the reasons for your recommendation.

Oral testimony may be presented **only** at the August 28 meeting (three minutes maximum). You may also pre-submit those comments via email to: Commission@dfw.wa.gov.

If you are interested in providing comments on the proposed changes but are unable to attend the hearing, you should send your written testimony to the Commission at the above email or the following address:

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501

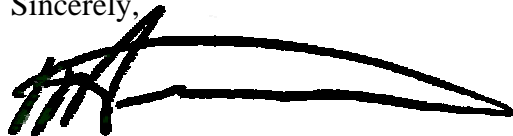
After the August 28 public hearing, the Commission will consider adoption of the proposed rule changes during the next regularly scheduled Commission public meeting, scheduled for September 2, 2004, via telephone conference call. **No public testimony will be taken during the conference call or at any time after the August 28 meeting.** For information on how to attend the September 2 meeting, please contact the Fish and Wildlife Commission office at (360) 902-2267.

This letter is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact (360) 902-2200 or TDD (360) 902-2207, and allow seven working days to process your request.

If you are a person of disability and require accommodation for attendance at the August 28 meeting, please contact Susan Yeager at (360) 902-2267.

We value citizen input and want to thank you for your interest in Washington's resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lew Atkins', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lew Atkins
Assistant Director
Fish Program

Enclosure

	Current Rules (Rules with moratorium in place)	Proposed rule changes
WAC 232-12-619		
Remember that you may also propose an amendment, or change, to the proposed rule changes or the current rules. The Commission is particularly interested in hearing your ideas on the issue of an annual limit for wild steelhead, if the decision is made to allow wild fish to be retained.		
Seasonal steelhead limit	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore the annual limit of five wild steelhead, taken from waters where retention of wild steelhead is allowed.
Daily wild steelhead limit	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore the daily limit of one wild steelhead, taken from waters where retention of wild steelhead is allowed.
Wild steelhead release	No exceptions allowed to the rule requiring wild steelhead release.	Restore language that would allow exceptions to the statewide rule of wild steelhead release.
Steelhead moratorium	There is a moratorium on the retention of wild steelhead from April 1, 2004 through March 31, 2006.	Delete the language creating the moratorium.
WAC 232-28-619		
Remember that you may also propose an amendment, or change, to the proposed rule changes or the current rules.		
Bogachiel River – mouth to Highway 101	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through April 30, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Calawah River - mouth to Highway 101	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through April 30, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Clearwater River - mouth to Snahapish River	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through April 15, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Dickey River (including all forks)	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through April 30, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Goodman Creek outside Olympic National Park.	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through last day of February, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Green (Duwamish) River- From the First Avenue South Bridge to SW 43rd Street/South 180th Street Bridge:	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>July 1 through July 31 and September 16 through November 30, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Green (Duwamish) River- From the SW 43rd Street/South 180th Street Bridge to South 277th Street Bridge in Auburn	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>July 1 through July 31 and October 1 through November 30, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Green (Duwamish) River- From the 277th Street Bridge to Auburn-Black Diamond Road Bridge	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>July 1 through July 31 and October 16 through November 30, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Green (Duwamish) River- From the Auburn-Black Diamond Road Bridge to the Tacoma Headworks Dam	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>July 1 through November 30, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Hoh River from mouth to DNR Oxbow Campground Boat Launch	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention – <i>December 1 through April 15 one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>

	Current Rules (Rules with moratorium in place)	Proposed rule changes
Hoko River from mouth to upper Hoko Bridge	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through March 15, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Pysht River	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through the last day of February, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Quillayute River – from the mouth to the confluence of the Soleduck and Bogachiel River	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through April 30, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>
Quinault River, Upper from mouth at upper end of Quinault Lake to National Park boundary:	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through April 15, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i> (Note: the end date for the season on the Upper Quinault River was changed from March 31 to April 15 during the normal rule change process. The steelhead moratorium then closed wild steelhead retention on the river. The proposed season shown reflects the new end date).
Soleduck River - from the mouth to the concrete pump station at the Sol Duc Hatchery	No wild steelhead retention is allowed.	Restore rule allowing wild steelhead retention - <i>December 1 through April 30, one wild steelhead per day may be retained.</i>